

Aviation Advisory Committee
July 19, 2006
Milton, Florida

The Aviation Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Randel Compton, Vice Chairman James Hopmeier, and members Jimmie Beavers, Clay McCutchan, and Marty Martin. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker) and County Engineer (Roger Blaylock). Chairman Compton called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Martin moved approval of the minutes from the June 21, 2006 meeting; Hopmeier seconded, and the vote carried unanimously. (4-0)

Pensacola Flight Watch Inc. Issues

Dale Holbert with Pensacola Flight Watch Inc. thanked Santa Rosa County and the Aviation Advisory Committee for the numerous projects currently underway at Peter Prince Airport. He said he can email a timetable of the projects upon request.

Holbert said Phase I of Discovery Park is substantially complete. He said right now the Flight Watch Board is looking into when to open the park. Holbert said Phase II includes the Covered Observation Platform and the Plaza of Honor. He said they do have substantial funding for Phase II and noted Santa Rosa County's contribution will be used in Phase II. Holbert said several entities have expressed an interest in helping with financing, and Flight Watch hopes to have all funding for Phase II by late September. Holbert said when Phase I opens there will be something in place showing what the completed park will look like. Holbert said Discovery Park will be a credit to the community and for use by all Escambia and Santa Rosa County citizens.

Holbert said the Safety Committee is still having a hard time convincing FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) the importance of PAPI (Precision Approach Path Indicator) lights on runway 1-7 at Pensacola Regional Airport. He said they have one more resource to try to get PAPI lights installed on runway 1-7. Holbert said this is the one item the Safety Committee has not been able to complete in a timely manner.

Holbert said Flight Watch is still working with AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) regarding the TIS (Traffic Information Service) elimination at Pensacola Regional Airport. He said as he understands it, there is a delay with the updated radar.

FBO (Fixed Base Operator) Issues

Davis Glass discussed the drainage problem on the four acres behind the shop due to airport improvements and said he will get with Blaylock to resolve this issue.

Glass said Simmons reported an objection to banner towing on Peter Prince Airport. He said he has 18 years of banner and glider towing experience and asked what the exact problem is. Glass said a near miss with a tenant and a yellow aircraft was reported. He said he is unaware of anyone with a yellow aircraft flying when this event supposedly occurred.

Compton said the committee members received an email regarding safety concerns with banner towing and unauthorized storage in hangars. Beavers said his concern with banner towing is flight safety. He said he witnessed a pilot taking off against traffic to pick up a banner and this raised a number of questions. Beavers asked if the county is aware of this operation at the airport. Glass said he towed banners at the airport for eight years and never had a problem. He said banners are picked up into the prevailing wind and the FBO has an established banner pattern. Glass described the flight pattern in detail. Compton asked if there is county policy regarding towing operations. Blaylock said no.

Beavers said if in fact the county knows about the operation and allows it to happen the county is liable if a banner comes loose. He discussed the potential hazards associated with student pilots at the airport with no published information on banner towing. Beavers said his concern is for the airport and the liability associated with the use of the field. He said he felt it is incumbent upon the FBO to notify the tenants when this practice is occurring on the field.

Compton asked if there is any business relationship between the FBO and the banner towing operation. Glass said no. Beavers asked if the FBO is compensated for the use of the field. Glass said no. Glass said it is a legitimate business, and there is no compromise in safety. He said he is speaking on behalf of the banner operation. Hopmeier said some good questions have been raised that need answers. He said banner towing happens all over the country, and he felt certain FAA has banner towing guidelines. Blaylock said the county is in the process of developing airport standards that explicitly address this operation on the field. He said if this is a for profit operation it should fall into the same category as someone spraying pesticides or fertilizers. Blaylock said the county should be compensated for use of the airfield.

Chairman Issues

Darren Meek with Meek's Aerial Advertising said he notified Tammy Simmons of the banner towing operation on February 28th by email. He said Simmons agreed to contact the FBO. Hopmeier asked Meek to inform the committee on banner towing guidelines. Meek briefly reviewed the operation. He said he has lived in Santa Rosa County for 20 years and should have the right to use the airport at no cost. Meek named several businesses using the runway and asked if they will be taxed. Hopmeier said FAA requires any commercial activity from an airport to contribute back to that airport. He said county standards have not been developed yet but the fee will not be at a rate that could potentially put Meek out of business. Hopmeier reviewed a previous discussion regarding the minimal fee crop dusters will be charged.

There was further discussion regarding safety issues and county liability. Compton asked if there are any restrictions regarding this operation at the airport. Blaylock said Santa Rosa County controls all operations at the airport. He said he will meet with the County Attorney and Risk Management to address liability concerns.

McCutchan thanked Meek for attending tonight's meeting. He said a liability study should be done on anyone operating an informal business at the airport if one is done on Meek's Aerial Advertising. McCutchan said he has not seen any problems with

banner towing operations over the past eight years. Blaylock said the county has inspections and Code Enforcement to keep businesses out of the hangars. He said no commercial operations are supposed to be being operated in the hangars. Blaylock said Simmons reports to this committee on a routine basis regarding airport inspections that address business operations from the hangars. He said the cases that have been identified have been turned over to the County Attorney. Hopmeier said no one is saying this is an inappropriate operation. Beavers said he has a responsibility to bring any issue that may be a potential liability to this county or a flight safety issue to the Aviation Advisory Committee.

Walker said he will contact Simmons regarding the email and discuss the concerns with the County Attorney. He said he will provide a report at the next meeting.

Beavers said he felt the banner towing business should suspend operations until all issues are resolved. Martin suggested waiting until Walker can report back to the committee. He asked several questions regarding the flight patterns and hours of operation. Walker said Meek notified Simmons about the operation, and additional information will be provided at the next meeting. He said he does not recommend suspending the operation at this time. Walker said in the interim a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) can be posted. McCutchan said charts can be placed in the FBO briefing room and on frequency 122.975.

Don Weloth said there are two mandatory issues that need to be addressed. He said the first issue is to announce every time a banner is being towed. Weloth said anyone in the traffic pattern is responsible for other traffic as well as their own. He said the second issue is having liability insurance with the county named as the insured. Weloth said every time someone gets in a plane and leaves the runway there is a safety issue.

Beavers said recreation vehicles, cars, etc. are parked at the airport for long periods of time and someone needs to address this. Walker said Simmons needs to be notified when this occurs.

Engineer Issues

Blaylock provided an update on the current JPA's (Joint Participation Agreement) for airport improvements. He said the east access roadway JPA was returned because the county is not in the position to fund this improvement in the near future. Blaylock said \$1.1 million is under contract, and he reviewed the anticipated funds to be received for the projects. Blaylock said over the next five years the county has \$2.8 million worth of work with \$1.5 million in available funding. He said he is working with the Budget Director on borrowing \$750,000.00 for the new T-Hangars. Blaylock said all of the improvements are based on estimated amounts. He said the 24 T- Hangars will be bid and awarded in September. He said all hangar rental fees will be used to repay the hangar loan.

Blaylock said realignment of Taxiway A is complete as well as the taxiway to the new hangar area. He reviewed the airport improvements currently under contract. Beavers commended Blaylock on his report.

Other Business

Holbert asked when the minimum standards will be complete. Blaylock said the Airport Standards were put on hold during hurricane recovery. He said a draft will be presented to this committee soon for review.

Holbert discussed how hard it is to get anything changed in the Airport Facility Directory. He said one of the continuing problems is getting NOTAM's printed in a timely manner.

Martin said over the last few weeks helicopter flights have been slow at Whiting Field. He said they will be back to full operation on Monday and Tuesday. Martin noted there will be a lot more aircraft flying at Spencer Field and around Peter Prince Field.

There being no further business to come before the Aviation Advisory Committee at this time, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.